

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A ~~method of dying a fabric material for use as a tennis ball covering, comprising:~~

a) rubber sphere having an outer surface; and,

a) fabric material glued to the outer surface of the rubber sphere, said fabric material being a felt made from a mixture of wool and synthetic fibers, the fabric material having been dyed a fluorescent yellow color by a dyeing-said method comprising the step of contacting said felt with a bleaching agent prior to, or simultaneously, or quasi-simultaneously, with a fluorescent yellow dye such that the felt exhibits the following characteristics:

a chroma value of 110 or more,

a lightness value of 95 or more, and

a reflectance value of 125 or more.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) The tennis ball-method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said fluorescent yellow dye has a ~~colour~~ color index number acid yellow 250.

4.-5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently amended) The tennis ball-method as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said synthetic fibers are polyamide fibers.

7. (Currently amended) The tennis ball-method as claimed in Claim 6, wherein said polyamide fibers are nylon 6,6 fibers.

8. (Cancelled).

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the content of wool fibers in said felt material is at least 40% by weight.

11. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said fabric material is a woven fabric which comprises warp and weft yarns, and said wool content of said fabric material~~-weft yarns comprise~~ comprises at least 20% by weight of weft yarns wool.

12. (Cancelled).

13. (Cancelled).

14. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said fabric material is processed in piece form in the dyeing method.

15. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said fabric material is contacted with a partitioning agent in the dyeing method.

16. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said partitioning agent is an alkylarylsulphonate in water and comprises 50-60% by weight of the salt of dodecylbenzenesulphonic acid and triethanolamine.

17. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said dyeing method is conducted in a jet-dyeing apparatus.

18. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 17, wherein a liquor ratio of from 6:1 to 8:1 is used to run said jet-dyeing apparatus.

19. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 18, wherein the liquor has a pH of from 4.2 to 4.5.

20. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said dyeing method comprises contacting said material with the bleaching agent prior to said material being contacted with said fluorescent dyestuff.

21. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said dyeing method comprises contacting said material~~-is contacted~~ with the partitioning agent prior to said material being contacted with said fluorescent dyestuff.

22. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 15, wherein said bleaching agent is added simultaneously or quasi-simultaneously with the partitioning agent in the dyeing method.

23. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-method~~ as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said bleaching agent is an inorganic reducing agent with chelating agents and comprises 30-40% by weight tetrasodium ethylene diaminetetraacetate and 30-40% by weight disodium disulphite.

24-28. (Cancelled).

29. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-fabric material~~ as claimed in Claim 1, ~~Claims 27,~~ wherein said dyeing method produces a lightness value of~~-is~~ 96 or more.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently amended) The tennis ball~~-fabric material~~ as claimed in Claim ~~27~~ 1, wherein the dyeing process produces a fabric material which exhibits the following characteristics:

- i) a chroma value of 110 or more;
- ii) a lightness value of 97 or more; and
- iii) a reflectance value of 128 or more.

32-49. (Cancelled)

50. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 6, wherein the content of wool fibers in said felt is at least 40% by weight.

51. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 31, wherein the content of wool fibers in said felt is at least 40% by weight.

52. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 50, wherein the step of contacting said felt with said bleaching agent is carried out prior to contacting said felt with the fluorescent yellow dye.

53. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 50, wherein the step of contacting said felt with said bleaching agent is carried out simultaneously, or quasi-simultaneously with contacting said felt with the fluorescent yellow dye.

54. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the content of wool fibers in said felt is 20% by weight to 80% by weight.

55. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the bleaching agent is a non-ionic hydroxylamine derivative.

56. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the bleaching agent is an ionic mixture of sodium metabisulfate with the sodium salt of ethylenediamine tetraacetic acid.

57. (New) The tennis ball as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the bleaching agent is a reduction-bleaching agent.